Wing B 5139

THE Sovereign's Authority, And the Subject's Duty, Plainly represented in a SERMON Preached at the VISITATION, *April* the 12*th*. 1681. In the Parish-Church of *Halstead* in *Essex*.

By *PHILIP BROWNE*, Vicar of the same, and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of *Albemarle*.

My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to Change; for their Calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the ruine of them, Prov. 24. 21, 22.

Save your selves from this untoward Generation, Acts 2. 40.

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TO

His Illuſtrious Grace,

CHRISTOPHER,

DUKE of *ALBEMARLE*,

EARL of *TORRINGTON*,

BARON *MONCK* of *Potheridge*,

Beaucampe and *Teyes*, &c.

Knight of the moſt Noble Order of the *GARTER*,

One of His Majeſtie's moſt Honourable Privy-Council,

And Lord Lieutenant of *Eſſex* and *Devonſhire*, &c.

May it pleaſe your Grace,

'*TIS become cuſtomary of late to prefix a great Name to every little Diſcourſe that comes abroad, and indeed when the Subject is great and momentous, the Preſumption is the leſs, and the more excuſable; and I hope your Grace upon the ſame ſcore will pardon this great boldneſs of mine, and will never think the worſe of*

the Matter for the ſmallneſs of the Bulk. Truth lies in a very little room, and needs not any fucus *to ſet it off when it meets with a Mind duly prepared to receive it: and both the neceſſity and ſeaſonableneſs of preſſing this great Duty which the Sermon recommends and enforces, is not, I am ſure, unknown to your Grace, who, upon ſome late remarkable Occaſions, have ſhewn your ſelf to the great ſatisfaction and encouragement of the beſt, and ſhame of the worſt ſort of People, an Eminent and Illuſtrious Example and Pattern of what is here preſs'd upon them. And when I call to mind your Grace's unparalleld Behaviour at a time when You appear'd for the Service of your King and your Country, among a ſort of People that ſhewed as little fear of God, as honour for the King, and reſpect to your Grace; and with what Magnanimity and Gallantry of Spirit you endured, nay, with what Heroick Prudence and Wiſedom you deſpiſed and contemn'd their abominable Inſolencies and moſt daring Affronts, (the chief thing for which they were then noted) I may (and I think very juſtly and truly, and doubt not but I have the ſuffrage of hundreds that were not onely Eye-witneſſes, but geat Admires of your Invincible Fortitude and Exemplary Patience) ſtile your Grace the Mirrour, if not the Confeſſour, of Loyalty. But alaſs! in this Apoſtate Age*

of

of ours (when Diſobedience ſhall be ſainted, and Rebellion made a Mark of the Godly Party, and all Loyalty run down with the Rabble, and induſtriouſly expoſed by ſome popular Demagogues as a thing merely to be houted at, that ſo they may thereby render the beſt Services inſignificant and ineffectual) ſuch Examples as this of your Grace's are little ſet by. And therefore 'tis time to appear for deſpiſed Loyalty, and uſe our beſt endeavours to reclaim a back-ſliding People, and if poſſible, to bring them to a better mind, and things to a better poſture. Which, I aſſure your Grace, was the honeſt and hearty deſign of the Enſuing Diſcourſe, which had never been made more publick than the Preaching, had it not been for the deſire and importunity of ſome of my Brethren of the Clergy who were my Auditours at that time, and, I preſume, better Judges of the fitneſs and uſefulneſs of it to the Publick, than I pretend to be; whom, notwithſtanding my averſeneſs at firſt, I am upon ſecond thoughts the more willing to gratify, becauſe of the Opportunity I have thereby of expreſſing my Duty to your Grace in a publick Acknowledgment of thoſe high Obligations you have been pleaſed to lay upon me: And therefore I thought my ſelf obliged, as a moſt humble Teſtimony of my unfeigned Gratitude for the great and noble Favours you have vouch-

ſafed

ſaſed me, in the moſt humble proſtrate manner to lay this poor Offering at your Grace's Feet, not doubting of your favourable Acceptance thereof, from the experience I have ever had of that incomparable Goodneſs, Sweetneſs and Benignity, that naturally flows from your Grace's moſt obliging Temper and Diſpoſition. And indeed your Grace has the firſt and beſt right to it, for as your Grace had the Firſt-fruits of my Preaching, ſo you may juſtly upon a better ſcore challenge the Firſt-fruits of my Printing. And I declare to the World, that I offer it (under your Grace's Protection) with a ſincere and hearty Affection, and wiſh that the Succeſs may anſwer the honeſty of the Deſign of it; which was to doe as much good as poſſible I could in that little ſtation I am in. And whatſoever Fate it meets with, though never ſo bad, I am by the Grace of God reſolv'd, and ſhall be no leſs contented, to bear it. For as I have faithfully ſerved your Grace, and ever thought it my honour, as well as duty, ſo to doe; ſo I ſhall be as little aſham'd, nay, think it my Glory, to ſuffer with and for you, in ſo good a Cauſe. And may God Almighty take both it and your Grace, and all that belong to you, more eſpeciouſly your Illuſtrious Conſort, my ever-honoured Lady Dutcheſs, together with all honeſt, true-hearted, and obedient Subjects to his Majeſty (whom

(whom God long preſerve) into the Arms of his Gracious Protection, and ſcatter all the Enemies of our Church and State, is, and ſhall be the continual hearty Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Grace's moſt obedient,

Moſt faithfull, and moſt humble

Servant and Chaplain,

Philip Browne.

THE SOVEREIGN'S AUTHORITY, And, The SUBJECT'S DUTY, &c.

Rom. 13. 1.

Let every Soul be ſubject unto the Higher Powers.

OUR Apoſtle having in the former Chapter, among many good Inſtructions for a godly and Chriſtian life, laid down ſome neceſſary and preſſing Exhortations to Love and Unity in our mutual Converſe one with another; (for which End he ſets himſelf purpoſely to root out of all Chriſtian Minds that Ferment of Malice and Envy, Pride and Revenge, which are ſo apt to diſſolve that Unity of the Members of *Chriſt*'s Body, whereof Chriſtian Charity and Brotherly Kindneſs is the Cement: I ſay, having thus prepared and diſpoſed the Minds of Chriſtians to Peace and Quietneſs; for the better ſetling and ſecuring of that Peace in the World,) he in this Chapter teacheth us how we ought to behave our ſelves with reference to that Authority which God hath placed over us: Which, notwithſtanding that liberty and freedom that Chriſtianity hath entitled us to, we muſt own, reverence and obey; and

that by way of Duty too, for ſo ſaith the Text; *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers.*

He delivers it by way of Injunction, and the reaſon which he there aſſigns is becauſe they are the Ordinance of God, a part of his Inſtitution, *the Powers that be are ordained of God*, ſaith he, *and there is no Power but of God*, and therefore they have an unqueſtionable title to that Subjection and Obedience which is due from, and muſt be given to them, by every Chriſtian. For the *Romans* to whom our Apoſtle writes this Epiſtle, were Chriſtian Converts, and what he commands them in the Inſtance before us, is certainly of an univerſal Concern, and to be extended to all Chriſtians whatſoever.

But becauſe this is a thing that hath been not onely queſtioned, but denied and oppoſed by ſome late Pretenders to Chriſtianity; particularly the *Anabaptiſts* with ſome other wild Sects, the Revivers of the old *Gnoſticiſm*, who look upon Magiſtracy as an Heatheniſh Yoak, and tell us, that we are all equal in *Chriſt*, and that ſince the Times of the Goſpel there is no ſuch diſtinction as Lord and Servant, Sovereign and Subject; whereof this Chapter of Saint *Paul's*, beſides many others, is a ſufficient Confutation: And by others again, the ſame is ſtrangely limited, as if it reſpected Civil Affairs onely, and not Religious: I ſhall therefore, without any curious and nice diviſion, or critical obſervation of the Text, employ that little time I have more profitably, in laying down thoſe juſt and due meaſures of Subjection and Obedience, which every one of us ought to give to that lawfull Authority which God hath ſet over us. Onely by the way I ſhall obſerve, for the better fixing of the Apoſtles meaning, that the ἐξουσίαι, which is here tranſlated *Powers*, is the ſame with what the Apoſtle calls, Ἄρχοντες, *Rulers*, verſe 3. and διάκονοι τοῦ Θεοῦ, *Miniſters of God*, verſe 4. namely, Perſons inveſted with that power which he calls the

the Higher or Supreme Power, for ſo the Word is rendred, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man* (or rather as it ſhould be rendred, to every Humane Creature) *for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King* ὡς ὑπερέχοντι, *as ſupreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are ſent by him.* A place of the very ſame import with the Text. And indeed the word *Higher* as it is joyned with *Powers* in the Text, may well be taken to comprehend the whole Series and Concatenation of Power derived down from the Supreme to all the Inferiour Magiſtrates in their ſeveral degrees of Subordination, who from the loweſt rank of them gradually riſe higher and higher according to the meaſure of that power he hath entruſted them with; whom we muſt be ſubject to as far as their power reaches, as well as to the Supreme; nay, in obeying them we obey the Supreme, becauſe the Power is the ſame ſtill, to wit, the Supreme's, by whoſe Authority they act.

This being ſaid, I ſhall now examine how far God hath empowred the Supreme Magiſtrate to make Laws, and conſequently, how far ſubjection and obedience to thoſe Laws may reach without ſin, without injury to God, or our own Conſciences.

And for the better ſatisfaction of this Enquiry, I ſhall lay down theſe following Aſſertions.

Firſt, That the Magiſtrate hath power to ordain and impoſe Laws, and that both in ſacred and civil Matters. This appears by that Power which *David*, *Aſa*, *Jehoſaphat*, and *Joſiah* had, and exerciſed in Matters of Religion, as well as Matters of State; who ſettled, maintained, and defended that which was the true Religion, and extirpated and rooted out all falſe Religions, and whatſoever oppoſed and was inconſiſtent with the true. And moreover did not onely alter, but conſtitute and ordain many other things according to the Exigency of Affairs

and the Rules of Prudence, without any ſpecial or particular Warrant from God, in that very Worſhip whereof not onely the Subſtantials, but even the Circumſtantials too, had been long before appointed by God himſelf. And whatſoever was thus eſtabliſhed by their Authority for the better ordering and ſecuring of God's Worſhip, was punctually obſerved by all under their Charge, as that to which their obedience was peremptorily exacted. And this appears from matter of fact recorded in the Old Teſtament, wherein any one may ſatisfy himſelf that will but take the pains to peruſe thoſe Records.

And this Eccleſiaſtical Supremacy or Power of theirs to order the Affairs of Religion, was not ſo peculiar and appropriate to them, but that it belongs to all others that are inveſted with the ſame Authority; as undoubtedly all Chriſtian Sovereigns are, who have the like power to enjoyn the Obſervation of the Divine Laws, to eſtabliſh Matters of expediency for order ſake, and to puniſh all Tranſgreſſours whatſoever; according to what was long before propheſied and promiſed to the Chriſtian Church. *Iſa.* 49. 23. *That Kings ſhould be their Nurſing Fathers, and Queens their Nurſing Mothers.* This evidently implies that they are to take care of the Church, and to ſee that the true Religion and publick Worſhip and Service of God be rightly and firmly eſtabliſhed, duly and decently performed and attended reſpectively by all under their charge. And accordingly we find, that ſo ſoon as the Higher Powers became Converts to the Faith of *Chriſt*, *Conſtantine*, and other Chriſtian Emperours after him, underſtood this power of theirs well enough, and employed and exerciſed it in eſtabliſhing and defending the Church, and ſuppreſſing ſuch dangerous Errours as were manifeſtly contrary thereunto, and made many wholeſome Laws and Edicts againſt ſuch Hereſies and Schiſms as ſprung up in their days. And 'tis obſervable, that as the Empe-

Emperours and their Councils became more zealous for the Chriſtian Religion, the ſtricter they made their Laws, and with greater ſeverity cauſed them to be put in execution. And by this means the inſolency of ſuch Factions as then appeared, was much reſtrained and ſuppreſſed, and Unity and Peace in a good meaſure reſtored and eſtabliſhed in the Church. And for this reaſon no doubt among others Saint *Paul* in this Chapter of the Text tells us, that *they are Miniſters of God to us for good*, and likewiſe exhorts in his ſecond Chapter of his Firſt Epiſtle to *Timothy*, that *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions and giving of thanks be made, Eſpecially for Kings and all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty: for*, ſays he, *this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.*

Now this Power of the Magiſtrate in matters of Religion is not *Poteſtas Eccleſiaſtica imperata facere, not ſuch an Eccleſiaſtical Power as does qualify him to doe the things commanded in Divine Worſhip*; No, this belongs onely to the Prieſtly-Function, which is purpoſely deſigned by God and *Chriſt*, and accordingly ſet apart and conſecrated by Men rightly authorized and legally empowred, for that End and Service. But this Power of the Magiſtrate is *circa Eccleſiaſtica imperare facienda, about Matters Eccleſiaſtical*, to command that the things be done by thoſe whoſe proper office and duty it is to doe them. It doth not of right belong to the Magiſtrate to preach the Goſpel, to adminiſter the Sacraments, to excommunicate, abſolve, and doe ſuch other things as appertain to the office and adminiſtration of Biſhops and Prieſts; but he may and ought to take care that theſe things be duly done by thoſe to whoſe Function it belongs. His Power extends not to revoke, repeal, or alter any thing that belongs to the eſſential Worſhip of God, or by his own

Will

Will to conſtitute any new Worſhip of his own invention or approbation, in oppoſition to what is already revealed and eſtabliſhed by a Divine Law. This was *Jeroboam's* fault, who by ſetting up his Calves at *Bethel*, and cauſing them to be worſhipped, made *Iſrael* to ſin. But though the Magiſtrate cannot alter or repeal a Divine Law, or change the Eſſentials of Worſhip, yet he may order many things about the Worſhip of God, and appoint the outward Circumſtances thereof, namely, ſuch as relate to Time, Place, Habit, Geſture, and the like, for the more decent celebration thereof; He may eſtabliſh them by a Civil Sanction, and provide for their due obſervance, and puniſh thoſe who refuſe conformity therein, or cauſe diſturbances thereupon. And 'tis not onely in his power to ratify and eſtabliſh the Determinations of the Church in particulars relating to the outward Manner and Rule of publick Worſhip, but he can make that which is a Divine Law already, to become the Law of the Land. Religion may be incorporated into our Laws, and the Bible it ſelf may become our *Magna Charta*.

Secondly, Whatſoever Laws are impoſed upon us by a lawfull Authority in things not repugnant to the Laws of God, do bind the Conſcience. But this they doe not immediately, but mediately; not primarily, and originally in themſelves, and their own power; but ſecondarily, in force and virtue of that Law of God which commands obedience to Magiſtrates in all things lawfull. And ſuch things muſt be preſumed to be ſo, which God himſelf has not expreſly forbidden in his Word.

The Papiſts indeed tell us, that Man's Laws bind *non minùs quam Lex Divina*, i. e. *equally and in the ſame degree with God's*, and they ſay, we deveſt and deſpoil Princes of their Authority, and give Subjects leave to rebel, and bring Laws into contempt by teaching otherwiſe. But all this they ſay without reaſon, for we aſſert that

that Man's Law binds the Conſcience, but not equally with God's, not immediately in its own right, but by virtue of ſome antecedent and ſuperiour Law of God, either imprinted in the Heart by Nature, or revealed to us by Scripture, both of which command ſubjection and obedience. So that you ſee we deny not the thing that humane Laws bind the Conſcience, but onely differ in the manner of their obligation, which is not to bind immediately. And the truth of this will farther appear from theſe following Reaſons.

1. Were it true, that Man's Law binds equally with God's, then hence it would follow, that every tranſgreſſion of Man's Law without any further reſpect to God's, would be a ſin; which to aſſert, what leſs is it, than to make Man a God, and to conſtitute him abſolute Lord over the Conſciences of Men, and give him power to erect a ſpiritual and final Judicatory here upon Earth, and call Mens Souls to an account, and adjudge and ſentence them himſelf to eternal Death for every breach of his Laws? Whereas he is to leave this work to God, who will call them to account for the tranſgreſſion of Man's Law ſo far as it is a breach of his own, by which it is back'd and enforced. And therefore the violation of Man's Law is no farther a ſin, than as it is complicated with the breach of God's, which gives it its binding force and virtue, and conſequently Man's Law binds not in the firſt, but ſecond place, and under God. But

2. Should this be true, that Man's Law binds equally with God's, then 'tis poſſible for a Man to lie under two contrary Obligations to the ſame thing at the ſame time, for when God commands one thing and Man's Law the quite contrary, he is bound to doe it by one Law, and bound not to doe it by another, and ſo the ſame Action would be a Duty and a Sin; a Duty in-obeying God, and a Sin in diſobeying Man: And further it would hence

hence follow, that Man's Power is abſolute and unlimited with reſpect to God himſelf, and not derived from him and limited by his Law. But certainly God is the Original of all Power, of whom Man holds *in Capite*, and Man can have no power but what he receives from him, and when the Laws of God and Man interfere and contradict each other, the obligation of the latter wholly ceaſes; and therefore there is no pretence of their equality in their binding force and virtue; but God muſt have the preheminence, and be obeyed in the firſt place, and Man in the ſecond, and onely with reference to God, who will have Man's Laws ſubordinate to (and not co-ordinate with) his. But thirdly,

3. To tranſgreſs thoſe Laws of Men which contradict the Laws of Nature, or the poſitive Laws of God, is no Sin at all but a Duty. *Daniel* we know tranſgreſs'd that Decree of *Darius* which prohibited prayer to God for thirty days, and did not ſin therein. *Dan.* 6. 7, 10. When the Angel bad Saint *Peter* and the reſt of the Apoſtles (*Acts* 5. 19, 20.) to go and ſtand and ſpeak in the Temple to the People all the words of this Life, and for this being brought before the Council, and ask'd by the High-Prieſt, *did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this name?* their Anſwer was this, *We ought to obey God rather than Men.* They were fully ſatisfied that they did not ſin in doing what the Magiſtrate forbad to be done in this particular, becauſe they had an expreſs and poſitive command of God to doe what they did; which was their ſufficient juſtification: otherwiſe they had been to blame for going againſt the Magiſtrate's Command, if they could not have brought God's ſpecial Warrant to ſuperſede and ſet aſide the Magiſtrate's. And in like manner, ſhould any in authority command us to doe that which is expreſly forbidden by God in Scripture, or what our natural Conſciences tell us is a Sin,

or

or ſhould he forbid that which we are commanded to doe, in ſuch caſes the aboveſaid Plea of the Apoſtles is certainly warrantable; And we muſt, as our Saviour charges us, *not fear them which can onely kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul; but rather fear him, which is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in Hell*, Matth. 10. 28. And the reaſon hereof is evident, becauſe God hath a greater power and authority over Mens Conſciences, than any Humane Authority can have; ſo that if there be any moral evil in the thing commanded, or poſitive prohibition of God in the caſe, we muſt not doe it, but are bound to obey God that hath forbidden it, rather than Man who commands it. In which caſe we do not formally and directly diſobey the Magiſtrate that injoyns it, but we give God the preference and chuſe to obey him before the other, according to our duty, which is to obey him firſt by virtue of whoſe Authority we obey another: for were it not for this, that God by his Command hath made our obedience to the Magiſtrate neceſſary and due to him in all things lawfull, he could have no juſt right to challenge it without our conſent. And therefore if an Inferiour command us contrary to the Will and Law of the Supreme, we are not bound to obey him, becauſe both he derives his power of commanding, and we our obligation of obedience from the Authority of the Supreme, which muſt be ſuppoſed and preſumed to doe nothing againſt it ſelf. And thus ſtands the Caſe betwixt God and the Supreme Magiſtrate, *by him Kings reign*, and he gives them their Authority, and when he gives them a Legiſlative Power, he does it *cumulativè, non privativè*, that is to ſay, by way of enlargement, communicating his power to another in a due ſubordination to himſelf, and not ſo as to deprive himſelf or his own Laws of their binding force againſt the Laws of the Supreme, which

are to be regulated and guided by God's Laws. But the aforesaid Plea will not hold in any other Cases that fall short of those which I have now mentioned.

4. To transgress or disobey those Commands of Lawfull Authority, which are left undetermined by Scripture, and do not contradict the Laws of God and Nature, this is sinfull.

In Matters indifferent which are not particularly determin'd by the Laws of God, for instance, such as concern the outward Administration and Government of the Church, the Supreme Magistrate has doubtless a power to determine things, provided they be regulated by the general Rules and Directions of Scripture. Obedience to Authority in all things lawfull is no indifferent thing, and that is lawfull which is made so meerly by a Humane positive Law, though the thing it self in the general nature of it be left indifferent, *i. e.* neither expressly commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. And therefore in such things we must have a care how we pretend or plead Conscience as a bar to our Obedience; for Conscience must be brought to a certain Rule, and we must forbear or refuse nothing as against Conscience, but what is against some evident and clear Rule either of God's Word, or the Law of Nature; against Faith or good Manners. If it have nothing of this nature to rely upon, you may call it Perswasion or Opinion, or what you please, but you cannot truly term it Conscience, which is a Knowledge founded upon the clear and manifest Will of God. And you must have a care of opposing your own private Perswasions or Opinions that have no express Warrant from Scripture against the publick Determinations of the Magistrate which ought to overrule them. If Authority hath not determin'd any indifferent Action, then we are at our own choice and liberty, we may doe it or not doe it as we see cause; but if Authority

rity hath interpoſed and determin'd it either to be done, then we are no longer at our liberty, we muſt obey; and that *not onely for wrath, but for conſcience ſake*; as Saint *Paul* tells us, v. 5. And the good that will thereupon accrue to the Publick by our complying and obeying, will vaſtly countervail and tranſcend the loſs and reſtraint of our private Choice and Liberty, and make an abundant amends for it: for by our ready complyance with Authority in ſuch Caſes, it will come to paſs, that all ſcandal will be avoided; Our Charity, Humility, Obedience, to the good example of others, openly teſtified and declar'd to the World; Church compoſed, Dangers prevented, the Publick Charity revived, Chriſtians edified, Kingdom ſettled; God obeyed and our Governours for God's ſake: And what more or greater things can we deſire or wiſh for to make us happy? I am ſure by the contrary we open *Pandora's* Box of Evils and Plagues upon us, and plunge our ſelves into an Ocean of Miſeries, which one would think our own Experience enough to have taught us, and might be a fair warning to us for running into the like again.

Obedience to Authority is elſewhere clearly aſſerted and commanded in Scripture, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours as unto them that are ſent by him.* Subjection you ſee is due both to Supreme and Subordinate, but not alike to both; to Sovereign firſt becauſe the fulneſs of humane Power originally reſts in him; to Subordinate next, becauſe they have it derivatively, at ſecond hand, and but in part. And this obedience to Supreme and Subordinate muſt not be onely in ſome few things, which ſuit our own humour, and may ſerve ſome deſign or private intereſt; but every Ordinance or Edict which carries no contradiction to, or inconſiſtency with God's, muſt be

ſubmitted to. And as there is no exception in Scripture of Things, provided they be lawfull or of an indifferent nature, from the Magiſtrate's Authority to entitle them to our obedience; ſo there is no limitation or exception of Perſons that are to obey, whereby they may plead exemption from this Duty. *Let every Soul*, that is, let every Man, *be ſubject to the Higher Powers*, of what rank, quality, or degree ſoever he be, κἂν Ἀπόστολος ᾖς, κἂν Εὐαγγελιστὴς, κἂν Προφήτης, κἂν ὁτισοῦν, &c. ſaith Saint *Chryſoſtom*; *be thou an Apoſtle, Evangeliſt, Prophet, or whatſoever thou art*, (there's no exception) thou muſt needs be ſubject, and that *not onely for wrath, but for conſcience ſake*; that is, not onely to avoid the danger, diſpleaſure and puniſhment of the Magiſtrate, which he threatens to all that reſiſt and diſobey his Laws; but out of duty and obedience to God, whoſe Deputy and Vicegerent he is, and who commands us to be ſubject and yield obedience to him, as to his own Miniſter, his own Ordinance, and Conſtitution. And therefore is it poſſible for an honeſt and upright Chriſtian to plead Conſcience for his diſobeying of Lawfull Authority in things innocent and indifferent, when the Scripture, which is a Law to all Mens Conſciences, expreſly commands them to obey and be ſubject for Conſcience ſake? ſo that you ſee there is a double obligation lying upon us to be ſubject, the one humane, *viz.* the wrath of the Magiſtrate; and he muſt be a Madman that wilfully runs himſelf into this danger without a juſtifiable cauſe: the other obligation is divine, namely, conſcience towards God, whoſe Officer and Miniſter he is. And who commands us to be ſubject. So that in diſobeying the Magiſtrate in any thing wherein he may lawfully command us, and has power given him by God ſo to doe, we do plainly diſobey God himſelf; and he will not hold us guiltleſs for our manifeſt contempt of his own Ordinance, but will puniſh

puniſh it ſeverely, *They that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation*, v. 2. But none of theſe Bands or Obligations will hold thoſe whom the Apoſtle mentions, 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. viz. *Traytours, heady, high minded*, who as bad as they are, have a form of godlineſs, and in plain contradiction to Scripture will plead Conſcience for their contempt of Authority. And from ſuch as theſe the Apoſtle there bids us turn away, that is, ſhun and avoid them, and have no familiar converſe with them, for there is a great deal of danger in it, foraſmuch as their words will eat as doth a Canker, or ſpread like a Gangrene, that is, they have a ſtrange kind of infection in them apt to poiſon the Minds of Men, and ſo draw them into the ſame condition with themſelves. *And of this ſort* (as he goes on to deſcribe them) *are they which creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women laden with ſins, and led away with diverſe luſts. Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth, men of corrupt minds*, of perverted Underſtandings, and ſome of them at leaſt, *reprobate concerning the Faith.* And I wiſh I could ſay of our Sects what the Apoſtle ſays in the very next words of thoſe in his daies, *but they ſhall proceed no further, for their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all men*; which for ought we know time may yet bring to paſs: and I pray God for their own ſakes and the Churches Peace to haſten it.

Be the Matter of Authority never ſo indifferent, I am ſure the Doctrine of Obedience to Authority is not ſo; neither is it more left to our liberty to urge and preſs it, than it is left to yours to practice it; for it is our duty to put you in mind of theſe things. It is the Charge Saint *Paul* gives to *Titus* (which we muſt diſcharge too) to *put them in mind to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magiſtrates*, Tit. 3. 1. not onely ſenſe of duty to God, but love to your Souls conſtrain-

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us to it: *Whoſoever reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God; and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Sure, they little think of this Text, who live in the defiance of the Magiſtrate's Laws, and have learned to deſpiſe Dominions, and ſpeak evil of Dignities.

Our Saviour *Chriſt* both by his Precepts and Practice doth eſtabliſh and confirm Authority, and his Apoſtles every where upon occaſion enjoyn obedience thereunto. 'Tis Saint *Paul's* great boaſt in his defence he makes for himſelf before *Feſtus*, (*Acts* 25.) that *neither againſt the Law of the Jews, neither againſt the Temple, nor yet againſt Cæſar, he had offended any thing.* You ſee he was carefull to yield obedience both to Church and State, and to preſerve his duty to his Sovereign entire and unblemiſhed. And in another place, he ſays, *I have committed nothing againſt the People, nor Cuſtoms of the Fathers:* he complied with thoſe innocent Uſages and Cuſtoms which then obtained among them, and were derived down from their Forefathers and ſettled by a long Preſcription. It moſt plainly appears from Scripture Precepts and Precedents that to thwart and contradict the Laws of our Superiours in things which contradict not the Laws of God and Nature, is a great ſin; it is no leſs than a manifeſt contradicting the plain Word and Will of God; 'tis a reſiſting God's Ordinance, and a breaking the Bonds of Society; It opens a gap for all ſorts of Impiety and Wickedneſs; it throwes the World off of its Hinges, and turns all things upſide down, as we have learned by woefull experience: And ſuch as know themſelves guilty herein, and are endeavouring what they can to bring our old Confuſions upon us, if there be any ſuch here, I ſhall deſire them ſeriouſly and impartially to conſider theſe things, leſt they periſh in the gainſaying of *Core*.

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But to make ſure work, and be as plain and clear as poſſible I can in a Duty of ſo great importance, wherein the Honour of God, the Credit of Religion, the Peace and Welfare of the Nation, the Security of Government, and the comfortable Diſcharge of a good Conſcience, are all concern'd, I ſhall for our better direction ſubjoyn theſe three ſhort Rules.

1. If God command any thing we muſt ſubmit without more adoe, and not trouble our ſelves about the expediency or lawfulneſs of it. *Abraham* diſputed neither, when God commanded him to ſacrifice his Son.

2. If the Magiſtrate command any thing, we may, yea, we ought to examine the lawfulneſs of it, yet not with an anxious curioſity as deſirous to ſpy out ſome little hole or other to creep out at; but with a modeſt ingenuity, diſcovering to God and the World the unfeigned ſincerity of our deſires both to fear God and honour thoſe whom he hath ſet over us; and having uſed ordinary moral diligence to inform our ſelves the beſt we can, if no unlawfulneſs appear in the thing commanded, we ought to ſubmit to it, not troubling our ſelves about the expediency of it, let them that command it look to that, 'tis they that muſt anſwer for it.

3. Where Authority hath left us free, and no Command either of God or Man has circumſcribed us, there we are at our own liberty to doe as we think good, but not ſo as to doe what we liſt, for we ought to have ſome regard and conſideration of our Chriſtian Brethren and fellow Members of *Chriſt*'s Body, the Church; and we muſt doe that which according to the exigence of preſent Circumſtances (ſo far as our Diſcretion and Charity will ſerve us to judge) ſhall ſeem moſt expedient and profitable to mutual Edification and the Publick Good.

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There is one Caſe behind that deſerves to be conſidered, ſuppoſe I queſtion the lawfulneſs of that which is commanded by Authority, what muſt I doe in this Caſe? In anſwer to this I ſhall give you my thoughts in what follows.

1. We muſt be carefull to diſtinguiſh betwixt that which they call a gain-ſaying Conſcience and a doubting Conſcience; betwixt a Conſcience that condemns a thing as utterly unlawfull, and a Conſcience that onely makes a doubt of the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs of an Action. Now, I ſay, if thy Conſcience has condemn'd a thing as abſolutely unlawfull, thou hadſt need be ſure that it has done this upon ſufficient and warrantable grounds, that is, thou muſt be well aſſured that the Scripture does condemn the ſame thing too; for Conſcience is not a Rule of it ſelf, but onely as it is ſubordinate to Scripture; And to ſpeak properly, Conſcience is nothing elſe but the certain knowledge of our Duty as it is revealed by God in Scripture (which is the laſt and fulleſt declaration of the Mind and Will of God concerning our Duty, and both ſuppoſes and takes in the Law of Nature) 'tis the agreement of our Knowledge with God's, for Συνείδησις is σὺν Θεῷ εἰδέναι, when our Apprehenſions and Opinions of things do clearly and fully accord with God's Word; 'tis a practical underſtanding and judgment of things as they really are what God has made them, and not as we imagine them, and often miſtake them. Now all that we have to doe in this particular, is carefully to ſee what God has made lawfull or unlawfull, and we may know this by Scripture, where God has laid down ſuch plain and neceſſary Rules of our Duty as are obvious to the meaneſt Capacity, and further than theſe we cannot pretend or plead Conſcience, that is we muſt not preſume to have any knowledge from God beyond what theſe Rules do teach us. Now if the Magiſtrate enjoyn

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any thing that falls not within the compaſs or comprehenſion of theſe Rules, either to forbid or command, we doubtleſs may and ought to obey him therein; for where Scripture is ſilent (as it does not pretend to deſcend to all particulars) there the Command of the Magiſtrate does undoubtedly take place; for the Dominion of Conſcience can reach no further than Scripture, which is the utmoſt bounds of its Juriſdiction; if it pretend to act further, it goes beyond its Commiſſion: And therefore be our Perſwaſions never ſo ſtrong and powerfull, if they have no clear Scripture to warrant them, they cannot ſet aſide the Magiſtrate's Authority, which begins where the Scripture ends; and by God's own Charter plainly recorded in Scripture, he is empowered and appointed under God to give Law to our Actions, and to be a Rule to us in thoſe particular Inſtances which Scripture takes no notice of, but has left free for him to determine, as he ſhall ſee cauſe. But if the Magiſtrate command any thing directly contrary to Scripture, and thou haſt a certain knowledge thereof, and accordingly thy Conſcience does condemn it as unlawfull, thou oughteſt by no means to doe it, no, not when he bids thee: But if it be a thing dubious and queſtionable whether the Scripture hath made it lawfull or no, and the Minds of Men are variouſly divided in their Judgments about it, certainly if the Magiſtrate interpoſes his Command, he ought to determine thee in this Caſe, thou oughteſt to obey him: for Scripture is plain for thy obedience to him, and if thou canſt not bring as plain Scripture againſt that particular Inſtance of Obedience which he exacts from thee, as there is for the Duty in general, that is, if it be not particularly forbidden, thou canſt not without ſin refuſe it. But what if through miſtake and errour a Man condemn that to be unlawfull which the Magiſtrate enjoyns as lawfull, and verily thinks with

himſelf that he is in the right, is he to obey the Magiſtrate in this Caſe? I know what is uſually ſaid about it, namely, that he ought not to obey, no, not at the command of the Magiſtrate, ſo long as he is under that Perſwaſion, and though he be in an errour; but under favour I crave leave to think the contrary, and my Reaſons are theſe.

1. Where a Man's Perſwaſion is grounded onely upon ſome high preſumption, or ſeeming probabilities, but not upon a clear certainty (as muſt be acknowledged here where a Man is known to be in an errour) and the Magiſtrate's Judgment and his come into competition about the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs of a thing; I think there is much odds on the Magiſtrate's ſide, as having the greater advantage of the two, and more means and better helps to inform himſelf rightly about the matter: and that therefore the publick Conſcience ought to take place before the private, and conſequently that every Man ought to ſubmit his private Perſwaſions to the publick determination of the Magiſtrate, when he cannot ground his Perſwaſion upon an evident certainty, but onely upon ſome bare probability. And beſides, where a man is brought to that paſs, that which way ſoever he takes, he cannot avoid ſin, as is uſually ſaid in this caſe, that if he go againſt his Perſwaſion (which he calls his Conſcience) and obey the Magiſtrate, he ſins, becauſe he does that which he thinks he ought not to doe; and again on the other hand, if he follow his Perſwaſion, and diſobey Authority, he nevertheleſs ſins, becauſe he acts againſt manifeſt Scripture that enjoyns obedience; the queſtion is, whether of the two is the greater ſin, to diſobey the Magiſtrate againſt clear and undeniable evidence of Scripture, or to diſobey his Conſcience or rather Perſwaſion which is onely grounded upon ſome high degree of probability preſum'd on in Scripture,

Scripture, which ſurely muſt not be allowed to vye with a certainty. The latter may be a ſin againſt Conſcience or rather private Perſwaſion; But I am ſure the other is a direct ſin againſt God himſelf (who is greater than Conſcience) inaſmuch as it plainly contradicts his immediate and plain Word, that expreſly commands our obedience to Authority in all things wherein he has not made a clear and manifeſt Exception. And therefore I ſay, he ought, notwitſtanding his Perſwaſion, to take the ſurer and ſafer ſide, and obey; but eſpecially he ought to doe this, if

2. He has been duly and rightly informed about it by thoſe whoſe proper office and duty it is to inſtruct him, and under whoſe care and inſpection God has placed him, to wit, the Church, and ſuch Paſtours and Curates of Souls as ſhe ſets over him to guide him in his Spiritual Concerns; to whoſe conduct he ought to ſubmit himſelf, and follow their directions in thoſe things wherein he is not manifeſtly and particularly tyed up by Scripture, whereof he is not ſo proper a judge as they, whoſe ſtudy and employment it is to propound its true meaning to him, and to remove ſuch doubts as may hinder his neceſſary Duty. And therefore before he reſolve the one way or the other, he ought to apply himſelf to, and conſult them about it, and ſubmit his own private Perſwaſion to their judgment and determination in the matter, and ſtand to their Reſolution. And this practice appears from Scripture it ſelf, where, in the 15*th* of *Acts*, we find *that certain men came down from Judea, and taught the Brethren, that except they were circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, they could not be ſaved.* Here you ſee was a Perſwaſion about a matter of a very high concern, the Salvation of Mens Souls, and ſuch a one as had greater countenance from Scripture, than many Perſwaſions in our days, which was

the reaſon that hereupon ſo great difference aroſe at *Antioch* about Circumciſion, ſome were perſwaded one way and ſome another, and no doubt there were Probabilities, and Scriptures were alledged on both ſides: Well, what did they doe in this caſe? certainly they did not eſpouſe every one their particular Perſwaſions, and divide and ſeparate thereupon, and ſet up diſtinct Churches and hold diſtinct Communions; this was not the courſe they took; but they very wiſely and diſcreetly agreed and determin'd, *that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other ſelect Meſſengers, ſhould go up to Jeruſalem unto the Apoſtles and Elders about this Queſtion, and know their mind and determination about it*; whereupon the Apoſtles and Biſhops met together in Council to conſider of it, and after ſome little debates *pro* and *con*, they conclude and decree, *that Circumciſion was not to be impoſed upon the Gentile Converts, or any other, as neceſſary to Salvation*; and their Sentence and Reſolution of the caſe, ſo ſoon as it was publiſhed and made known, fully ſilenced all Diſputes, and was to them a Rule or Canon to which they preſently yield obedience. For when the Epiſtle was read in a full Audience, the Text ſays, *they rejoyced for the Conſolation*, that is, they laid aſide all their particular Perſwaſions and Prejudices, and joyed in the publick determination and with great comfort and ſatisfaction of mind did acquieſce in it, and accordingly obſerved it. But if after all this care and proviſion of the Church to inform and ſettle their minds, they had ſtood ſtiff in their Opinions and Perſwaſions, and rejected the Judgment and Reſolution of the Church, how pardonable ſoever their Errour might be before through ignorance or miſtake, yet no queſtion now, after they had been ſufficiently inform'd otherwiſe, it would have been judg'd wilfull and inexcuſable; and they would have undergone the Cenſures of the Church, had they

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perſiſted in it, and obſtinately adhered to their Perſwaſions, and ſo ſlighted the Authority of the Church. And

3. Were Men wholly in their own power, and could diſpoſe of their own outward Actions as they pleaſe, their own Perſwaſions might then be allowed to determine their Actions; but ſince the ſtate of the World is ſuch that Men muſt neceſſarily be under Government, which ſubjects their Actions to the will, determination and controul of the Governour, where he upon good advice and mature deliberation is pleaſed for the Publick Good to limit them, and God doth not interpoſe, Men have no power in thoſe Inſtances to limit themſelves, and govern their Actions by their own private Perſwaſions, Reſolutions or Concluſions, in oppoſition to the Publick Laws and Determinations of Authority: for next to Scripture the Laws are to determine us, and where they fall ſhort, our own Perſwaſions are to guide us, otherwiſe they muſt not take place of the Laws. And this Order no doubt was deſigned by God as mainly conducing to the Peace and Quiet of the World, elſe he had not ſet up Government, which would be impracticable and inſecure without it: for if Peoples Perſwaſions muſt take place before the Laws of the Land and Conſtitutions of the Church, there will never want a pretence to fruſtrate them, and Men will perſwade themſelves to the contrary on purpoſe to evade them, eſpecially when they agree not with their humour or intereſt; and ſo Religion will be turn'd into Rebellion and Faith into Faction. If therefore it cannot be clearly proved and demonſtrated, that what is commanded by the Magiſtrate is forbidden in Scripture, let Men perſwade themſelves never ſo much to the contrary, they muſt not refuſe obedience: for next to the Scripture the Publick Conſtitutions are certainly the

the Rule of our Actions, and where they are not contrary to Scripture, we muſt be guided by them, and no Man has power to determine himſelf againſt them: For this is to ſet up Private Authority in oppoſition to the Publick, and to enthrone Fancy, Humour or Intereſt, inſtead of Law. And therefore whatſoever a Man's private Judgment is, if it be not built upon good warrant from Scripture, though he may ſuppoſe, or at leaſt pretend it, it muſt ſtrike ſail and ſubmit to the Publick; he muſt not give Law to the Magiſtrate, but the Magiſtrate muſt give Law to him.

And beſides, I think a Magiſtrate may well be allowed to have the ſame power over his Subjects, to overrule and vacate any private Perſwaſion or Reſolution not grounded upon apparent Scripture, that a Father has to null and make void the Vow of a Daughter that is not *ſui juris*, *at her own diſpoſe*, but under the tuition and government of her Father, if he diſallow of the Vow; and for this conſult *Numbers* 30. Now certainly a Subject whilſt he is under the juriſdiction and government of his Supreme, is no more *ſui juris*, *in his own power*, and at his own command to diſpoſe of ſuch Actions as the Magiſtrate does not allow of, than a Woman remaining in her Father's Houſe, is in reſpect of her Father. And indeed the Magiſtrate's Power and Authority over his Subjects, is acknowledged to be Paternal, and that in a far higher and ſupereminent degree; doubtleſs then he has power to reſtrain us in thoſe things which otherwiſe we ſhould be oblig'd to, and may diſpenſe with and null ſuch private Obligations as otherwiſe would be of force to us. But eſpecially, ſince the Magiſtrate looks no further than our outward Actions, and exacts onely our outward compliance in thoſe things wherein we are not bound up by Scripture, and leaves our Minds at liberty, and puts no force upon them, ſo

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as to oblige us to think every thing he commands to be the beſt, we may well grant him our Actions, and keep our Perſwaſions to our ſelves; though no doubt there is a ſubmiſſion of our Underſtandings and Judgments (ſo far as Scripture is not concern'd in them) as well as of our Wills and Actions due to him; and when our private Perſwaſions juſtle with his Laws, 'tis no leſs duty than good manners to give him the way, and yield him the upper hand, and think, that he has at leaſt as much wiſedom and underſtanding as we pretend to; nay, more reaſon for what he does, than we are able to comprehend, or in a capacity to dive into. And therefore we ought not to be ſo tenacious of our own private Opinions or Perſwaſions whatſoever they be, as to oppoſe and confront them againſt the Magiſtrate's Will declared in his Laws and Conſtitutions, and thereupon withdraw our Obedience. 'Tis a poor thing, if, where the Scripture hath left us to our liberty, the Magiſtrate, who is authorized and entruſted by God to govern us, has not power to chuſe for us, and oblige us to ſtand to his Choice.

But if any think otherwiſe that a Man is bound to prefer his own private Concluſions before the publick Laws and Conſtitutions, and to follow his own private Opinion or Perſwaſion, which he calls his Conſcience, yea, though it be in an Errour, againſt the declared Will of the Magiſtrate; yet let ſuch a one know, that the following the Dictates or Suggeſtions of his own miſtaken Conſcience, as it will not acquit him from the ſin of diſobeying the Magiſtrate, nor conſequently, (without repentance) from the Penalty which God himſelf hath annexed thereto, to wit, Damnation; ſo neither will it take off, exempt, or excuſe him from the juſt Puniſhment awarded by the Magiſtrate, and ſo due to that Diſobedience; which he muſt be content to ſubmit to, and

and undergo without repining, murmuring, or the leaſt ſhew of impatience; otherwiſe he betrays, not Conſcience, but a worſe Principle which he covers with the pretence of Conſcience: for he muſt be ſubject either actively or paſſively, and if he cannot obey, he muſt ſuffer, and that for Conſcience ſake too. And it is againſt all the Rules of Government, and no ways conſiſtent with the Publick Good, that the publick Sanctions of Laws ſhould be made to give way to any private Satisfaction, or be diſpenſed with (by any Authority leſs than the Supreme) for the eaſe and exemption of any particular Man or Party; for this would open a gap to all Perſons whatſoever to eſcape, and every one would plead Conſcience to be freed from the Law, and how is it poſſible infallibly to diſtinguiſh the reality from the pretence? We may indeed preſume it from their carriage and behaviour as to other things, but we cannot be certain of it; we muſt be forced to take it upon their Word, and every Man's Word is alike in this reſpect, and if we believe one we muſt believe all, unleſs we will deal partially; and ſo all having the ſame Title, would claim the ſame Privilege, and by this means all Laws would be fruſtrated and ſoon fall under contempt, and the Government trampled upon: for every body, as I ſaid, would be ready to plead Conſcience when any thing is eſtabliſhed that does not comport with his humour or intereſt, and when he ſees that by this means he can ſo eaſily evade it. And therefore I wonder at the Wiſedom of ſome late Votes, that (*ſatis pro imperio*,) did againſt all Law and Reaſon authorize the diſobedience, juſtify the impunity, and forbid the proſecution of thoſe, whom we catachreſtically ſtile *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, upon the Penal Statutes; and ſo (to the great fruſtrating and great weakening of the Laws in being, and the diſheartning of every loyal and obedient Subject) put the Trangreſſours of the Law into the ſame Circum-

Circumſtances with the Obſervers of it. But why ſo, I pray? and why Theſe, I wonder, more than the other Diſſenters, there may be ſome difference in their Religion, the one worſhip Images, and the other worſhip Imaginations; but I think it may eaſily be made appear (if it be not ſufficiently done already) that they both hold Principles equally dangerous and deſtructive to the Eſtabliſhed Government; and therefore the Merits of the one are not ſo much above the other, that they deſerve the ſpecial Regards of Authority. But poſſibly, they are all of a ſudden fallen ſo deſperately in love with the Eſtabliſhed Church and Government, that they will quit their Pretenſions rather than occaſion any publick diſturbance? I wiſh we were well aſſured of this, but there appears little ſigns of it as yet. Or, are they become ſo modeſt, ſo peaceable, ſo quiet, that they will content themſelves with ſuch bounds and limits, as Authority hath indulg'd them, of enjoying their own Ways in their own private Families with three or four more if they have a mind to their Company? for my part, I will believe it when I ſee it. But what did they mean by this overflowing Kindneſs of theirs? did they intend their private Wills, or rather Velleities, ſhould be a Law to us? this is to ſet up an Arbitrary Power indeed in oppoſition to the Will of the Sovereign declar'd in the Eſtabliſh'd Laws. Or, did they mean that we ſhould diſobey the Laws in being, before they be legally repealed? This is to render all Laws precarious. While they are Statutes in force, they doubtleſs muſt be obſerved, and nothing can vacate them but the ſame Authority that eſtabliſhed them; and they muſt be our Rule to be govern'd by; till they are actually repealed, and others of equal authority take place; elſe we are left at miſerable uncertainties, and quite to ſeek for our Duty. But certainly no wiſe Man that hath any regard to the faithfull diſcharge of his Duty or Of-

fice concern'd in thoſe Laws, will think himſelf excuſed from it by an Authority leſs than what enacted them; or out of an imaginary fear of what might enſue, omit his plain Duty. For doubtleſs it is in the power of no one, or more Subjects, without the allowance of the Sovereign, to diſpenſe with the Laws ſo long as they are in being; and therefore we had need be well aſſured, when we decline, or diſobey, any Law, that we doe it upon juſtifiable grounds, I mean ſuch as (if they will not be allowed before a humane Judicatory) will not fail of admittance at God's Tribunal, where we ſhall be ſure to be rewarded for any ſuffering that we undergo upon a juſt account.

And now I think I have in ſome good meaſure ſatisfied my Text, and I hope, all ſuch as will be govern'd by Duty, Reaſon and Religion; and remov'd ſuch ſtumbling Blocks as are commonly thrown in the Peoples way to hinder them from complying with the preſent Eſtabliſhment both of Church and State.

And what remains now but to apply all to the preſent Occaſion of our Meeting this day? which I ſuppoſe is to enquire, how well We in our ſeveral Stations and Capacities have perform'd this great and neceſſary Duty of Subjection and Obedience to that Branch of Authority eſpecially, which is concern'd in the Eccleſiaſtical Laws intended for a Fence and Hedge to the Church; and which together with the other Branch of Authority concern'd in the Laws Temporal, make up and compleat the King's Supremacy over all Perſons, in all Cauſes, within theſe his Realms and all other his Dominions.

And that there are Higher Powers even in this Kingdom, no queſtion is to be made of it; God be thanked, we are not yet all upon the ſame level, though there be ſome that both wiſh and endeavour it by plucking the Wings of Authority, and ſtriking at the tall Cedars. And

that

that theſe Powers are from God is no leſs evident from the Apoſtle, who in the next words tells us, *there is no Power but of God.* This is very good Scripture and as true as any other Text of the Bible; and if we believe this, as we muſt, if we believe any other part of Scripture, then we muſt believe alſo that the Higher Powers are no Creatures of the People, that they have neither their original nor eſtabliſhment from them; and that therefore they cannot ſet up and pull down whom they pleaſe, without a manifeſt Invaſion and an unaccountable Uſurpation of God's ſole Prerogative, whoſe onely Right it is to remove Kings and to ſet up Kings; as *Daniel* tells us, chap. 6. 21. 'Tis not then in our choice and liberty to appoint whom we pleaſe to reign over us, nor can we put Princes by their juſt Rights, which God, Nature, and the Laws of the Land, have ſettled upon them; and ſuch as come thus endowed and recommended to us, we ought to own, reverence and obey, as God's Officers and Miniſters, his Vicegerents and Deputies to govern us here upon Earth. And whomſoever they make choice of and empower as Subordinate Governours either in Church or State, we muſt look upon them as ſent by them, impreſs'd with the ſtamp of their Authority, and proportionably to the degree of their Subordination and Power, pay them the like duties of Reſpect and Obedience. And it is the great Bleſſing of God to the World, thus wiſely to order things for the Peace and Happineſs thereof, ſo as not to give the leaſt Countenance or Warrant to the leaſt Rebellion or Commotion of Subjects againſt their lawfull Governours whether Supreme or Subordinate, upon any pretence whatſoever; for he has branded all oppoſition of what kind ſoever with the ſevere threat of Damnation; a Word that carries fire and brimſtone in its Bowels, which ſhall one day burſt forth to the unſpeakable terrour and torture of all ſuch as refuſe

to be ſubject, unleſs they make their Peace with God and their Governours by a timely repentance and ſubmiſſion. And therefore, I ſay, we are all concern'd in this great Duty, and accordingly I ſhall exhort you all to it. And,

1. I ſhall with due ſubmiſſion addreſs my ſelf to the Reverend and Venerable our Viſitours, That ſince they have a Power entruſted to them by thoſe that are higher than they, that they would be pleaſed to expreſs their duty and allegiance to them, by a faithfull diſcharge of that truſt which they have committed to them, according to the true intention and meaning thereof, and to ſuch ends and purpoſes as it was deſign'd for, and for which it was given them; namely, for the defence and ſupport of the Church; the diſſipation of all Errour and Schiſm, to the utter diſcouragement and diſappointment of the grand Eſpouſers and Abettours thereof; the promoting of God's Publick Worſhip as it is eſtabliſhed by Law; which in theſe parts is moſt ſhamefully and cuſtomarily neglected and deſerted, to the great diſhonour of God, the ſcandal of all Religion, the weakning of the Church, and the reproach of the Government, which hitherto (out of great tenderneſs I ſuppoſe) has been too remiſs in the execution of ſuch Diſciplinary Laws as were purpoſely deſign'd to put a ſtop to the Inſolency of a growing Faction (which has almoſt overſpead the Nation, and like *Pharaoh*'s Locuſts are ready to eat the reſidue of that which is eſcaped, and to devour the Land) and ſo to ſettle Publick Peace and Unity among us. And indeed what ſignify the Laws or penal Cenſures, if they be not put in execution? they are like the Log in the Fable which *Jupiter* threw down to the Frogs to be their King, which at firſt aſtoniſhed them with the mighty ruſhing noiſe and terrour of its fall, but when they ſaw it lay idle and did not ſtir, they came and crawl'd and leap'd upon

upon it, and made a meer mockery of it. The life of Laws is in the Execution of them, without which they are but a dead Letter; And it were in many respects more convenient not to have them made at all, than being made not to see them executed. For by this neglect Offenders are emboldened and encouraged, and Authority slighted and contemn'd. And as in the Natural Body when Physick hath not its due operation, but onely stirs the Humours without purging them, it causeth a new fermentation of bloud, and makes way for the noxious Humours to seize on the vital Parts; so it frequently happens in the Body Politick. And I wish something like this may be timely prevented in this Kingdom. What *Solomon* observed of the Laws of God is as true of the Laws of Men, *Because sentence against evil works is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to doe evil*, Eccles. 8. 11.

In a word, Saint *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans*, (chap. 12.) doth according to the variety of Gifts dispensed by God to his Church, sort, and lay down very pertinent Exhortations to excite every one to doe their respective duty, among which I find this; which I shall humbly recommend to, and leave with, you; *Let him that ruleth, doe it with diligence.*

2. In the next place I shall address my self to my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy, that they would according to their duty and trust reposed in them, often inculcate this Duty of the Text to their respective Charges, and put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates. And certainly this was never more necessary and seasonable than in these Turbulent Times of ours, wherein there is so much pains taken, both covertly and openly, by some pestilent State-Bouteseus and Incendiaries, to instigate and fire Mens Spirits, first, into discontent and mutiny,

and

and then into downright diſobedience and rebellion, upon every little pretended miſcarriage of our Superiours in matters of Government, inſomuch, that if they doe not juſt what they would have them, they are preſently to be arraigned at the Subjects Bar, as if they were accountable to them for what they did. And thus every idle, prating, buſy-body, that neglects his own proper buſineſs and employment, will be meddling with his Governours, while in the mean time he forgets his own duty, which is ſubjection and obedience to thoſe whom God has ſet over him. Now if you can by any good means diſpoſe and work the People to a better temper, and the right underſtanding and practice of their Duty, you will doe God and your Country very good ſervice, and you ſhall not want your Reward. Therefore in this Particular, *Let him that teacheth, wait on his teaching*; *And him that exhorteth, on his exhortation*, Rom. 12. 7, 8.

3. To the Officers of the Church, thoſe that are ſworn to guard God's Worſhip, that you would take heed to your ſelves, and to that which is committed to you; for if you falſify your Truſt, and doe not that which you are obliged to by oath, you forfeit your Souls which you left to pledge in God's hand as his ſecurity for your faithfull diſcharge of that Duty, which you ſo ſolemnly promiſed to perform. But alaſs! how few are there that do regard either the duty of their Places, or the obligation of their Oaths; they think if they can (through the favour and connivance of the Court) make a Return of an *Omnia benè* (which ſome (God wot) underſtand much at the ſame rate that the Vulgar Papiſts do their Maſs; 'tis a thing of courſe, the traditionary uſe of it has made them expert in it; nay, may not ſome of them think that they are excuſed from their Duty in Engliſh, when they make a Return in Latine? I ſay, if they

they can doe this cleaverly,) they think they have done all their Duty, and acquitted themſelves like honeſt Men, and as they ought to doe; though (God knows) things be in miſerable diſorder in many of their reſpective Pariſhes. I am ſure as to my own, through the overvigilancy of the Wardens, the Communion-plate, and other ſacred Utenſils of the Church, are at this time in no great danger of being ſtolen, ſo few come near them now-a-daies. Nay, they have ſo great a veneration for them themſelves, that they are afraid to touch them when importun'd and call'd upon. And how then can they preſent others for that which they doe not themſelves? But to remedy this for the future, give me leave to adminiſter a little advice to you; You are in duty bound to look to the repair of Churches, to preſent all diſorders and miſdemeanours in your ſeveral Pariſhes, all Common Drunkards, Swearers, Fornicatours, Whores and Whore-maſters; all profane and debauched Perſons that ſhall come to your knowledge; together with all ſuch as come not to Church, and will neither joyn with us in our Publick Prayers, nor receive the Sacrament, but go elſewhere a-whoring after their own Inventions. Now 'tis to be feared that the reaſon why many of you do not doe this, is becauſe you are afraid of diſpleaſing your Neighbours, and getting their ill-will? but are you not alſo afraid of diſpleaſing God, and loſing your own Souls? will you venture to diſoblige him for a little private reſpect to a Relation, Friend or Acquaintance? would you but conſider it a little, you will ſee that you doe both them, and your ſelves, the greateſt injury in the World; for whatever you think, by your wretched connivence and the neglect of your Duty, you countenance and incourage them in a damnable ſin, in their wilfull neglect of God's Publick Worſhip, and rejection of the Churches Communion, and conſequently in their diſobedience to God and their Governours:

vernours: Whereas, would you but according to your Duty, *go out into the high ways and hedges* (as our Saviour ſpeaks) *and compel them to come in*, they would by God's bleſſing in time come to underſtand their Duty better, and at length by uſe and cuſtome learn to practiſe it, and then they would thank you for your charitable ſeverity. And that you may doe this with more eaſe and greater comfort and ſatisfaction to your own Conſciences, it would not be amiſs for you, when you firſt enter upon your Office, to give the Pariſhioners warning, and openly declare that you reſolve by God's aſſiſtance, faithfully and impartially to diſcharge the Duty of your Office, and to return all Perſons whatſoever, Fanatick and Profane Recuſants, as well as Popiſh, without favour or connivence, according to your Articles. And no man can have reaſon to take it ill at your hands if you be as good as your word, ſince you give them ſo fair warning. And to be ſure by this means you will rid your ſelves of the troubleſome importunity of ſuch as otherwiſe would be always craving an impunity at your hands.

If this Courſe were generally taken and conſtantly uſed, I am confident we ſhould quickly ſee the good effects of it, and ſoon find things in better order than they are at preſent. But ſo long as no courſe at all is taken to make the People better, I do not wonder that they are ſo bad, and that our Churches are ſo empty. And therefore, if you have any reſpect to God or your Governours; your own Souls or your Neighbours, or to that Church that gives the name to your Office, you will think of theſe things; and remember to take the Apoſtles Advice in the forementioned Chapter, *Be not ſlothfull in buſineſs*; in that buſineſs that concerns your Office.

4. And laſtly, to you of the Layety, that you would ſtrengthen the hands of your Governours, and encourage and eaſe the Burthen of your Officers, by your ready compliance

pliance and ſubmiſſive obedience to the Eſtabliſhed Laws and Conſtitutions; and that for this purpoſe you would not be eaſily frighted from your Duty, by I know not what extravagant Fears and Jealouſies which have been daily buzzed into your heads, on purpoſe to unhinge you from your Loyalty and Obedience, and ſo diſpoſe you for the deſigns of ſuch as ſo unmercifully ride you. God be thanked, we are ſettled upon as good a Bottom as we can hope or wiſh for; and there is no need of any change or alteration either of Religion or Government, as ſome have been projecting; 'tis the ſhamefull groſs neglect of that we have, (and not the want of a better) that makes us miſerable: For, for ought I ſee, had we the exacteſt Government and Diſcipline that is poſſible to be imagined, unleſs Men took more care and made more conſcience of obſerving it, than they do now a-daies, we ſhould be juſt where we are, and at the ſame paſs; For People generally (what through the Iniquity of the late Times, the inceſſant endeavours and miſchievous practices of the Heads and Abetters of our preſent Factions, and the remiſs Application of ſuch proper Remedies as the Law has provided) are ſo trained up to Diſobedience, that, like untamed Heifers, (unleſs they were forced to it) they would ſubmit their Necks to no Yoke.

But God be praiſed, there is no ſuch neceſſity of unhinging our ſelves for the ſake of any new Models that either are, or can be projected: For there is no Nation in the World ſo happy as we are in our Eſtabliſhed Laws and Conſtitutions, did we but rightly underſtand our happineſs: We are well enough ſettled, if we do not diſſettle our ſelves. You would count him a Madman that ſhould pull down his Houſe over his head, becauſe it is ſubject to Caſualties, and may at one time or other be ſet on fire. Let us a-Gods-name doe our duty, and with peace and comfort and ſatisfaction enjoy the Preſent, and let

the Future when it comes take care of it ſelf; and (as our Saviour ſays) *take no thought for to morrow, for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf, ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* We have no reaſon at all to anticipate our Miſeries, ſhould they prove what they are ſuppoſed and fear'd to be; 'tis no point of diſcretion at all, were we certain of future Evils, to torment our ſelves before the time. But certainly we ſhould be the maddeſt People in the World, ſhould we, to prevent or avoid an imaginary Danger (which we have no certainty of, and know not whether ever it will come to paſs or no,) run our ſelves into a certain and preſent Miſchief; and for an uncertainty ruine the Kingdoms Peace and Proſperity.

I know the great thing that we ſeem to be concern'd for, and that ſo much diſquiets us at this time, is Religion, which we apprehend to be in danger, at leaſt are made to believe ſo; and I obſerve the greateſt Outcry to be made by thoſe who all along for the time paſt, have notoriouſly ſlighted and neglected our Religion, and, as much as in them lay, trampled both Church and Government under foot; ſo that I begin to ſuſpect, That there is ſomething more in the Wind, than what we are made to believe. And may we not well think by ſome late Proceedings, that it is not ſo much the ſecurity of our Religion that ſuch Sticklers aim at, as ſomething elſe to which they make Religion a meer Stale? But ſuppoſe it were ſo as they ſay, muſt the danger of Religion throw us all into Tumults, and make us fly in the Face of our Governours, becauſe for reaſons beſt known to themſelves, they will not doe every thing that we would have them doe? Religion is beſt ſecur'd in our lives and practices, in a peaceable, quiet, humble and ſubmiſſive behaviour and demeanour to thoſe that God hath ſet over us. And 'tis not the danger, or the ſecurity, ſafety and defence of our Religion,

ligion, that will juſtify the leaſt heart-burning, repining, or murmuring, againſt our lawfull Governours, much leſs diſobedience and rebellion. Our Saviour who is the Authour of our Religion, would not ſuffer Saint *Peter*, without a Rebuke, to draw his Sword, though it was in defence of his Sacred Perſon, againſt the violence and injuſtice of a lawfull Power, that apprehended, arraign'd, condemn'd and crucified him, being altogether innocent. And indeed Religion it ſelf never ſuffers more, than by ſuch violent Courſes and rough Practices as theſe, that are pretended to be undertaken for its ſake. For ſubjection and obedience even to the worſt ſort of Princes, if they be our lawfull Sovereigns, is one of the higheſt Maxims and Rules of our Religion, laid down in Scripture, as our Text, and what follows after it in the ſame Chapter, is a ſufficient proof of; *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers: Whoſoever reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God, and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* v. 2. All which, and much more to the ſame purpoſe that may be found elſewhere in Scripture, was ſpoken when *Caligula*, *Claudius*, or *Nero*, the greateſt Monſters and cruelleſt Perſecutours of the Chriſtians, were Emperours. And accordingly the Primitive Chriſtians were wholly ſtrangers to oppoſition, violence and force, when they were put to this Plunge, either to ſacrifice to Idols, or to undergo the moſt cruel Tortures, Racks, Torments and Deaths, that could be invented by the wit and malice of Men and Devils. So far was the Plea of Religion in thoſe daies from ſanctifying or hallowing any rebellious or tumultuous Thoughts or Practices againſt the lawfull Powers then in being, though never ſo wickedly and maliciouſly bent againſt them. And certainly thoſe brave Primitive Martyrs and Confeſſours had as great a concern, care and tenderneſs for their Religion, as we pretend to have now. And

doubtleſs the Chriſtian Religion gain'd infinitely more by their heroick Sufferings, than it has done ſince by all our holy Wars that we have been engag'd in upon its account; for *Sanguis Martyrum ſemen Eccleſiæ, the Blood of the Martyrs fattened the Soil where it was ſpilt, and made it abundantly the more fruitfull.* And why ſhould we miſtruſt God's Providence, and be more impatient now, than they were then? In the name of God, let us ſtudy to be quiet, and every one doe our own buſineſs, and diſcharge ſuch Duties as are incumbent upon us, and truſt God Almighty with our Religion (and not with *Uzzah* unwarrantably put forth our hand to the Ark, though it ſeem to totter) whoſe Glory is as much concern'd for the Preſervation of it now as ever, and therefore muſt have the ſame care for it that ever he had; and He that hath preſerv'd it hitherto, will, we hope, continue it a long and laſting Bleſſing to this Nation: And I know nothing that will render us more deſerving of ſo great a Mercy, and engage God effectually to keep it among us, than the conſcientious practice and conſtant performance of ſuch Duties and Vertues as it recommends to us, and requires from us; among which this of the Text is a main and principal One, *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers.* Amen.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all poſſible Praiſe, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

THE END.

A Poſt-

A

POSTSCRIPT

To the

READER.

Courteous Reader,

THOU mayſt perhaps wonder, that this Sermon having been preach'd ſo long agoe, either came not out before, or comes out at all now. For the firſt, Know, that the Authour thought it his diſcretion to defer the publiſhing thereof (how much ſoever importun'd) till ſuch time as Mens Heats, and Paſſions (which were then up) were better allayed and cool'd, and they the more diſpoſed to receive good Impreſſions: for it was preached before his Majeſtie's moſt Gracious Declaration came forth, and every body knows the Diſturbance and Commotion that we were in then, and a good while after. And that it comes out now, is, (beſides the reaſons given in the Epiſtle Dedicatory) becauſe the Authour is in ſome good hopes, by his honeſt and plain dealing, of contributing ſomething towards the undeceiving and ſettling of Peoples Minds; and conſequently of being ſome way ſerviceable (as it becomes every good Subject to be in his proper ſtation) to-

wards

wards the promoting the great and neceſſary Ends of his Majeſtie's ſaid Declaration. And (God be thanked) Peoples Eyes are ſince that time a little better opened, and they begin to ſee the Tricks put upon us by ſome State-mountebanks, that, to make an experiment of their own Skill (to ſay no worſe of their Deſigns) put us all into a new Fermentation, and Feavouriſh Diſtemper; and then to render themſelves the more neceſſary, perſwade the World, That no Cure was to be had, but by their hands. But Heaven be praiſed, the World is in ſome good meaſure ſatisfied, that the Remedy they preſcribed, was as bad as (if not worſe, than) the Diſeaſe; as appears by the multitude of Loyal Addreſſes that have ever ſince been almoſt daily and weekly preſented to his Majeſty. And indeed who ſo fit and proper to cure a diſtempered Nation, and put a ſtop to the Malignity of a contagious Epidemick Frency, as He that onely can apply a Sovereign Remedy. God Almighty bleſs and protect his moſt Sacred Majeſty, and put a ſtop to the ill Deſigns of bad Men, and reconcile Mens Minds to Truth and Peace, and reſtore this Land of our Nativity to its priſtine Health and Soundneſs. So prays the Authour; and ſo will every good Subject pray, and ſay, Amen.